## **Artist Statement**

As an Artist-in-Residence during the autumn of 2003, I have enjoyed a multitude of artistic inspirations. From hearing coyotes howling amongst the formidable rock formations under a full moon to watching Big Horn Sheep graze across from the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, the Badlands National Park provides an endless display of natural beauty. Hiking the Castle Trail contained moments of visual splendor. Reading about the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee put the astounding landscape into a new perspective. Interacting with the 3rd and 4th grade students of Interior brought a refreshing outlook on the Badlands as a constantly renewed experience passing through the generations.

The final art piece I have chosen to create, reflective of the Badlands National Park, is a hand sculpted bas-relief ceramic tile mural titled Hoodoo Sky. Based on the landscape within the Park, this mural depicts awesome rock formations layered in glowing hues of red, gold, and brown. The sky is shown as a crisp blue filled with towering white billowed clouds. One of my favorite rock phenomena of the Park, a hoodoo, or cap rock, perches in the left corner of the Hoodoo Sky mural. Included also are a cactus and yucca plants. Aiming to capture my many moments of awe struck splendor, to culminate in a final artwork, has been challenging and rewarding. Truly, being an Artist-in-Residence with the Badlands National Park has been a wonderful once-in-a-lifetime experience.

To view more of Melanie's work please visit: www.workshopwonders.com/handcraftedtile.html